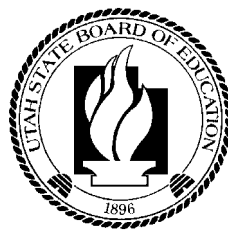


**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Wahlquist Junior High School  
1033 North 1200 West  
Ogden, Utah 84404**

**October 22-23, 2003**



Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
P.O. Box 144200  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Wahlquist Junior High School  
1033 North 1200 West  
Ogden, UT 84404**

**October 22-23, 2003**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

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## **FOREWORD**

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, October 22-23, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Wahlquist Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal James Shaw is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Wahlquist Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Wahlquist Junior High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
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*\*Board of Regents Appointments*

*10/30/03*

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Brian Smith .....	Supervisor Maintenance
Rodger Bailey .....	Supervisor Elementary Education
Kathy Harris.....	Supervisor School Lunch

# WAHLQUIST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

## ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

### School Administration

James Shaw ..... Principal  
Maria Dunbar ..... Assistant Principal

### Counseling

Krista Stettler ..... Counselor  
Von Haacke ..... Counselor

### Support Staff

Gaylene Dabb ..... Head Secretary  
Jeanenne Chadwick ..... Office  
Nadine Tribe ..... Attendance  
Linda Shoemaker ..... Counseling  
Francesca Bartko ..... Options  
Vicky Harrelson ..... Computer Lab  
Josh Tuveson ..... Special Ed. Aide  
Vicky Lamb ..... Special Ed. Aide  
Sandy Wandling ..... Special Ed. Aide  
Pam Soelberg ..... SWS  
Dave Tuveson ..... Head Custodian  
Mike Christiansen ..... Assistant Custodian

### Faculty

Sherry Bernard ..... English  
Larry Booker ..... Social Studies  
Brent Bourgeois ..... Math  
Kenna Brown ..... Special Education  
Katie Bush ..... TLC, Keyboarding, Yearbook  
Sande Clark ..... Media  
Kelly Cragun ..... Special Education  
Bret Craynor ..... Math  
Cristie Creamer ..... Health, P.E.  
Carol Daniels ..... Special Education

### **Faculty (Continued)**

Lisa Goring .....	Spanish
Derek Hoskins .....	Math
Deborah Jackson .....	Orchestra
Jeremiah Jackson .....	Art
Jerry King.....	Metals, ATE
Heather Kramer.....	English
Karma Lattin .....	Keyboarding, Business, Marketing
Susan McMurrin .....	Special Education
Bonnie Meaders .....	Physics
Stacey Phelps .....	Special Education
LeeAnn Prince .....	Clothing, Cheerleading, Student Government
Julie Quinn .....	Science
Jeff Rhees.....	Woods, Communications
Richard Sobers .....	German, Social Studies
Elisabeth Smith .....	Drama, Speech
Wayne Stevenson.....	Social Studies
MaryAnn Taylor .....	French
Shirley Taylor .....	Foods, TLC, Life Skills
Ann Tippets.....	P.E., Keyboarding
Pat Tsukamoto .....	English
Gary Turner.....	Spanish
Norm Unck.....	Science
Gary Weight.....	P.E.
Warren White.....	Social Studies
Michael Wooden.....	Band, Choir



# **WAHLQUIST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Wahlquist Junior High is a partnership among students, parents, community and educators that will provide students with a quality education and will enhance personal responsibility during their transition toward adulthood in a global society.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

Education is a life long process that accommodates our changing world with a curriculum that is integrated and teaches skills that are applicable to real life.

Teachers have the right and the responsibility to teach, and that students have the right and responsibility to learn.

Learning is a shared responsibility involving teachers, parents, students, and the entire community.

Each individual has value and should be treated with dignity and respect.

Teachers have the responsibility for meeting their students' educational needs within the framework of the state core curriculum.

Individuals are entitled to a school environment that is safe, clean, and healthy.

Schools are a training place for responsible, productive citizens.

Technology will enhance the students' ability to expand, enrich, and explore areas of interest.

High standards and expectations must be maintained for everyone in the school, yet educational programs should be flexible and various modalities incorporated to meet the needs of individual students.

Students need a variety of opportunities for enriching learning experiences beyond classroom activities.

Each individual is responsible for his/her actions and their consequences.

## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Robinette E. Bowden, Ed.D, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Linda Sorensen, South Davis Junior High School, Davis School District

Janet K. Jensen, Spanish Fork Junior High School, Nebo School District

George Miller, Utah State Office of Education

Sherry Devenberg, Crescent View Middle School, Jordan School District

# **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

## **WAHLQUIST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

### **CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

Wahlquist Junior High School is a public, suburban junior high school serving grades seven, eight and nine. It is one of nine junior high schools in Weber School District. Students from Farr West, Pioneer, Majestic and Plain City Elementary Schools feed into WHS. The school is organized by grade level, by departments, and recently by interdisciplinary teams.

WHS was built in 1941. Because of physical growth and changing a curriculum, three additions have been built. During the past five years, many areas of the school facility have been improved. However, the school can no longer expand its electrical load to meet increasing technology demands without major modifications.

The current enrollment is 808, 1.2 percent lower than last year due to recent boundary changes. The enrollment is almost equally divided between males and females, with the majority of the students being Caucasian. There are approximately forty students of other ethnic backgrounds, four students with limited English proficiency, and seventy-nine students serviced by the Resource Department.

The faculty and staff consist of a principal, assistant principal, two counselors, thirty-seven teachers, six paraeducators, four office staff members, two custodians, eight kitchen workers, and one police officer.

*a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The assistant principal has made a significant effort to collect and publish student achievement data and make this information available to the faculty. The fifty pages of the School Profile Section of the School Improvement Report contain data and graphs on student demographics, student achievement, disciplinary actions, and stakeholder perceptions. The following findings are reported within the text:

- WHS serves a relatively stable but diverse population (p. 17).
- WHS students score at a substandard level in the language arts portion of the SAT test. The data suggests a need to develop strategies to address this weakness (p. 20).
- There is a recognized limitation in the ability to disaggregate data due to a lack of technology such as COGNOS (p. 20).

- Concern is expressed over the percentage of students not scoring at mastery level on Utah State Core tests in math and science (p. 22).
- The percentage of trancies has decreased from 15 percent in 1999-2000 to 10 percent in 2002-2003. However, attendance data collected in 2002-2003 indicates that 81 percent of students are tardy for classes on multiple occasions (p. 36).
- Students and parents rate the staff at Wahlquist Junior High highly for being dedicated, approachable, and willing to help students. Over 60 percent of Wahlquist Junior High staff members agree Wahlquist Junior High has an atmosphere where students can succeed (p. 46).

*b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The Wahlquist Junior High staff is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It would be helpful if the report contained more detailed analysis of the data. Recognizing the limited time and resources for such investigation, it is suggested that the administration limit the extent of its data collection to the areas that can be adequately analyzed by department, grade level, gender, or ethnicity. The school would be better served by examining either NCE or stanine scores from the SAT 9 rather than percentile ranks. These test scores provide more reliable data for making judgments regarding academic growth (or lack thereof) by individual students or groups of students. The Visiting Team supports the schoolwide interest in using data available from COGNOS to enable further investigation of disaggregated data.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

The staff should consider establishing performance standards for its own work. Performance standards will allow the staff to determine an acceptable level for student, parent, and staff satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the system as a whole. For example, currently 81 percent of students have been tardy to class on multiple occasions. Therefore, the question to the faculty should be “Is this an acceptable level of attendance?” If not, what would be? Setting clear performance standards will assist the administration and staff in deciding what issues need to be addressed, as well as when changes in policy programs or procedures have resulted in the desired effect. A performance standard will also assist the school in strategically abandoning efforts that are either not working or no longer needed.

In an effort to identify specific student achievement targets, both Utah State Core Tests and Stanford 9 scores could be disaggregated by content clusters and quintiles (mastery, partial mastery, minimal, or near) for each grade level and, if possible, by gender and ethnicity.

## CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Interviews with parents, students, and teachers made it clear that the school community was invited to participate in the accreditation process lead by assistant principal Maria Dunbar under the direction of the principal, James Shaw. A fourteen-member School Improvement Plan Leadership Team facilitated the staff's analysis of data, crafted the school's mission and belief statements, and identified school improvement goals. The self-study has been a major focus of faculty meetings and staff development time for the past two years.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school's profile, in conjunction with survey data, supports the school's analysis of its strengths and limitations. However, additional analysis is required to pinpoint achievement gaps, student concerns, and potential improvement targets. The Wahlquist Junior High staff is aware of this need and has outlined steps in Action Plan Goal #2 – "Implement an information management system to more effectively access, disaggregate and analyze data to improve our ability to make better decisions on behalf of students." The time line for completion of this goal is 2003/2004. There is an expectation that the staff will then have the ability to revise and re-analyze the school profile during the 2004-2005 school year and beyond.

## CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Wahlquist Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. **Communication:** Students will communicate with clarity, purpose and audience awareness. Students will integrate the use of a variety of communication forms (e.g. oral, written, artistic, graphic, listening) and use a wide range of communication skills.
2. **Reading:** Students will use a variety of reading strategies to increase comprehension and fluency. Students will use strategies to read to learn and read for enjoyment.

3. **Thinking and Reasoning:** Students will use multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems, including those solved in math and science. Students will gather and use information effectively to analyze problems, formulate and test hypotheses and justify conclusions.

### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The collaborative effort to build a shared vision of the school has been inclusive of all vested groups of the school community. Teachers were involved in leadership roles and took very active roles in the development of the action plans.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

There is evidence that the administration and staff support the set of beliefs and mission of the school.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The DRSLs are learning goals that the school community has for all students. They should answer the question, "What should all students know and be able to do in order to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?" Additionally, the school's DRSLs should reflect the Utah Life Skills adopted by the Utah State Board of Education. It is recommended that the school pursue indicators and methods for gathering evidence of student achievement related specifically to school DRSLs.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Teachers have access to the State Core Curriculum, which they follow. Collaboration among teachers happens both formally (in department meetings) and informally (among individual teachers). Essential knowledge and skills are identified within each department. Most teachers are aware of and give priority to these as they develop and teach their curriculum.

Some curriculum mapping took place during an early-out day. Since this was done as a whole-faculty activity, teachers were able to identify some areas where cross-curricular connections could be made. For example, foreign language takes advantage of the opportunity to coordinate some of its lessons with some of the History Department's units. The Language Arts Department has worked with the Science Department on a research project. The faculty was energized by this collaborative experience, and expressed an interest in more opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration. They also recognized the value of this type of collaboration for student learning.

State Core standards have recently changed in some curricular areas. Teachers are adjusting to align to the new Core. Curricula are also evaluated and adjusted based on student achievement data. For example, reading scores indicated a need for improvement, and Read 180 is being added to the curriculum.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The staff, without question, buys into and supports the Reading DRSL. This is evidenced by the fact that all faculty members support, honor, and model reading during the sustained silent reading time. Further evidence of support for this DRSL is the reading inservice some of the faculty received from Wendy Chalk and Steve Ramirez, and then shared with other faculty members at the school. This is a step in the right direction toward a collaboratively developed, schoolwide reading curriculum.

The title of the inservice projected for the 2003-04 school year, "Teaching and Assessing for Rigor, Reason and Reading," indicates that the school will be addressing the Thinking and Reasoning and the Reading DRSLs. This will sharpen the schoolwide focus on teaching the DRSLs across the curriculum.

The faculty has stated in the action plan a desire to explicitly teach the DRSLs across the curriculum. The action steps include researching assessment systems and performance standards. This also will help the staff outline explicitly how they will teach the DRSLs and help them to ascertain whether the desired results are achieved.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the Visiting Team's visit, students at Wahlquist Junior High were observed engaging in a wide variety of learning activities designed to address a

wide variety of learning styles. These included cooperative learning groups, arts and crafts creations, hands-on manipulatives, inquiry/response, peer editing, teacher-directed instruction and modeling, total physical response (TPR), and technology-aided lessons.

It was clear that these activities were based on the essential knowledge and skills needed for all students to learn; the Visiting Team would recommend that all teachers continue to explore “best practices” that will actively engage students in learning.

Effective classroom management, noticeable in all settings within the school, resulted from the organizational strategies and established a positive climate for learning.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Based on the innovative instructional strategies implemented in many of the classrooms, it appears that teachers enjoy the freedom to experiment with new methods as they learn of them. The consequence of this is that the needs of students with different learning styles are more likely to be met. The results of assessments are periodically reviewed, and in some instances lead to modifications of the instructional processes to improve learning.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Students are consistently provided with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance. Specifically, a college student is employed on a part-time basis as a math tutor, working with students both during class time and after school. Some of the teachers post their assignments on Edline in an effort to communicate upcoming activities to parents, and all teachers are available to students as needed for extra help.

The school also offers study skills classes, remediation opportunities, and an “Options” program designed to support the emotional and academic needs of at-risk students. Finally, students in resource classes are exposed to real-life career experiences during the latter part of the school year.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*



The expectations for student achievement and performance standards at Wahlquist Junior High are not fully developed. Additionally, alignment of classroom and schoolwide assessments with teacher expectations is not consistently present in all disciplines. However, in those cases where the expectations for student learning are clearly defined, assessments of student learning are aligned with the essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards for student learning. For example, the Social Studies Department adjusted its curricula in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade history classes in order to better equip students with the knowledge needed on yearly standardized tests.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Standardized tests such as the SAT are given to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, with the results then evaluated and published; however, the staff is striving for more opportunities to collect data from assessments beyond these test scores. Several schoolwide assessments are implemented which pinpoint reading, math, science, English, writing, and vocational studies. In an effort to better analyze the plethora of data accumulated, two DRSLs specifically address assessment systems and disaggregation of data, which should facilitate the process immensely. Whole-school access to COGNOS data may help, as long as it is viewed as a tool and not an end in itself.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Assessments of student learning and grading practices are designed by individual teachers with the understanding that they align with objectives from the Core Curriculum; they are fair, unbiased, and used in an equitable manner after students have been taught the required information. For those students with IEPs, accommodations are made both as to adaptive instruction and individualized examinations.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

From interviews with faculty, students and parents, it is apparent that the administration actively promotes quality by giving the faculty autonomy in developing teaching strategies and in selecting appropriate professional inservice activities. Teachers report that there is an “open-door” policy and atmosphere in which teachers feel free to make recommendations for both schoolwide and classroom programs. The leadership now faces a new challenge as a result of this self-study: to maintain focus and to sustain the commitment of the entire school

community to the school's action plan and recommendations of the Visiting Team.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The administrative staff is knowledgeable and energetic in its pursuit of an effective continuous improvement model based on a data-driven action plan. The task ahead is to conduct inservice and train the faculty to continue to make decisions that are data-driven and research-based. The faculty collaborates well within departments and is using the structure of the focus groups to begin to collaborate schoolwide.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Although the school community has much to learn in the areas data collection and analysis, the Visiting Team senses a commitment to continue to improve. The entire staff is anxiously awaiting availability of a statewide computerized data reporting system, COGNOS. The Visiting Team suggests that the school conduct inservice on appropriate interpretation of data within statistical significance limits. There is already a flood of data contained within the School Profile that merits more in-depth analysis. Rather than add to the fifty pages of graphs and charts, the Visiting Team suggests that the school leadership thoughtfully limit tracked data to areas that will be interpreted and used to develop performance standards and eventual action plans to reach these standards.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Parents, teachers, and students report satisfaction with the school's leadership in this area. Although the building is more than sixty years old, the administration is taking great care to maintain a clean and pleasant learning environment. Teachers report satisfaction with the manner in which resources are allocated to meet the needs of teachers in various departments.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The administration works with the School Community Council to develop a spending plan for trust lands funds. Other decisions regarding school funds rest with the principal after collaboration with faculty, staff, and parents.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The leadership at Wahlquist Junior High provides skillful stewardship of the school. Parent, students, and staff members repeatedly commended the school's leadership for improving the school's climate and culture over the past four years. Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission. Students in the school are courteous and positive about the climate for learning. Students sense a sincere commitment on the part of the administration and faculty to support student success. The allocation and use of resources seems to align with school goals. The administration invites parents to participate in the School Community Council.

**Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

There are numerous examples of working relationships within the school that are effective in bringing groups of students and teachers together. Students feel that teachers listen to them, that they can approach teachers with questions, problems, etc., and that they are valued for their contributions.

The peer-leader program in the school involves 15 – 20 students who work with new students to orient them to the school, as well as providing a “go-between” for students and the administration, if needed.

Teachers are at their classroom doors between class periods to monitor the hall and to greet students entering the classroom. Both teachers and students commented that this practice has had a significant impact on the school culture or “sense of community.”

Classroom learning environments are positive and are conducive to learning. Classrooms visited were inviting and reflected the personality and teaching styles of each teacher. Students also commented that they liked their school and that they felt safe and were learning.

A local college student comes to the school on a routine basis to provide math tutoring opportunities for students.

District-wide teacher meetings held several times a year provide opportunities for teachers to work together and share ideas. Professional development and in-service activities are encouraged by district and local administration. It was noted

that two teachers were starting master's degree programs with Utah State University this coming spring.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

An ESL tutoring program was started several years ago. Spanish-speaking students tutor elementary students at a local grade school. Parents, through the PTSA, are involved in school focus groups and monthly meetings. Also, a community council exists to monitor the school trust lands monies received and address other issues of school-community relations.

The "Ed-Line" program allows students and parents to monitor student daily progress (reports, testing, assignments). Teachers post all work daily for each class on the computer program, which instantly sends the information to a school- and district-wide database "warehouse." Refinements to the data collections are ongoing and will prove helpful in decision making at district and classroom levels. Students and teachers, as well as several parents, commented that they regularly visit the school's Internet website to check on student assignments and grades. Students commented that they often use the Internet at home for homework and research.

A quarterly newsletter is sent, along with report cards, to each student's home.

Approximately 50 percent of the students' parents have participated in semi-annual SEOP meetings at the school. Eighty percent of the students have been involved in SEOP conferences within the last year.

Grade level meetings for faculty are held approximately every 10 days. The three groups (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades) set their own agenda and are guided by the action plans listed in the self-study. It was noted that these groups are relatively new and that teachers are beginning to catch the vision of what they can do. It would prove helpful in the future for these groups to be able to evaluate their action plans in meaningful ways to provide objective data to guide their progress. It was noted that the action plans only describe activities for the next year in any substantive way. Teachers commented that they want to see these processes continue, but may need additional guidance to sustain their efforts.

Several teachers commented that they have established formal and informal partnerships with several business and community organizations to provide supplies, equipment, speakers in class, and other resources. The administration is supportive and encourages these types of partnerships. These types of partnerships and alliances are meaningful and should be sustainable.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Wahlquist Junior High School's organizational structure supports continuous improvement and professional development. It was noted that there is little staff turnover at the school. Teachers commented that they feel appreciated and supported in their efforts. Students, likewise, noted that they enjoy their classes and feel that learning is taking place.

Several key members of the staff and administration participated in accreditation training over the last several years. Professional development programs could be better aligned and planned to fulfill the performance expectations to achieve the school's goals for improvement. Specific areas of improvement, based on factual information and data collection, will serve the school well. The professional development support, mentoring for new teachers, and collegial planning time should be evaluated and implemented where necessary. This should include attention to the Schoolwide Indicators of Quality: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness as defined by NSSE.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school is providing the climate for change and continuous improvement in the academic curriculum. The Utah State Core Curriculum is available in print and via the Internet to all. Teachers commented that they have often met to assure that their curriculum is aligned to the Core.

Planning time for focus groups and team meeting is supported by the district and local administration. They have expressed a commitment to continuous improvement.

Interviews and data support the conclusion that faculty members do focus on school improvement in the academic curriculum. The use of data from testing and other assessment tools was noted. It is recommended that faculty receive additional training and inservice on the use of data-driven decision making on a schoolwide basis.

The goals, DRSLs, and action plans need to be carefully followed and revised as needed over the next three years. It was not evident exactly how the action plans would be evaluated over the course of that time. Again, inservice activities may serve to strengthen and orient the faculty in that process.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

These do not apply because the school is not seeking accreditation through the NAAS.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The steps in each of the action plans are outlined from the 2003-2004 school year. There is no evidence of plans to continue this process for six years. There are no measurable benchmarks or alternative plans if standards are not achieved within the planned time frame. The Visiting Team is impressed with the sincere desire of the administration to continue the process, but suggests that more detailed action plans be created.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The faculty and staff seem genuinely committed to the action plans as outlined in the School Improvement Report. The challenge for the leadership team will be to refocus the goal of each action plan from teacher development to measurable student learning.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

There is an assumed positive correlation between increased teacher training and increased student achievement as a cause-and-effect relationship. The Visiting Team suggests that, as each step on the teacher-training module is completed, an analysis be made to determine the effect on student learning and to make modifications as needed to the plan.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The academic climate at Wahlquist Junior High School is serving the students and community well. The Visiting Team noted that school is a peaceful and safe environment and students enjoy being at school. The use of critical thinking skills was evident in many classes during the visits. Students were asked to engage in problem-solving for various situations as part of their instruction.
- The ATE shop classrooms are organized and safe environment for students. The metal shop teacher was very safety conscious and continually monitored student activities around equipment. The ATE business teachers effectively modeled and expected high levels of performance from students.
- The school facility is cared for very well. The school community takes pride in the school, and measures are taken to keep it looking and working well. The local city government has been active in assisting the school in yard and street maintenance, recently paving part of the parking lot and front entrance.
- The district has carefully managed chemical storage for the Science Department, and dangerous chemicals have been removed.
- The Principles of Technology teacher is using innovative technology tools that are integrated into the curriculum. All of the science teachers are using hands-on activities and are paying attention to sound instructional practices.
- Many staff members have advanced professionally. Several teachers indicated that they were encouraged to pursue post-graduate work this next year and are doing so.
- The Ed-Line computer program is being effectively used in conjunction with school attendance to track student performance. Assessment information is readily available to the school community. Appropriate security, in the form of passwords, is used to ensure compliance with FRPA laws.

### **Recommendations:**

- The school is trying to adapt to new technology applications in the facility. The 62-year-old building was not designed for these applications, and is in great need of retrofitting. Power supply in most classrooms is inadequate. Computers and nearby electrical equipment cannot be simultaneously operated without tripping circuit breakers.

- Additional funding for classroom supplies need to be improved. ATE and Science laboratory activities are seriously limited. Teachers improvise and often pay for classroom materials out of their own pockets.
- Air conditioning and heating for the building do not appear to be adequate. Teachers and students complained about 90°-plus temperatures during spring and fall months. A boiler failure this last winter caused disruption of essential services.
- The action plan as set forth in the study-guide needs closer attention to specific indicators of accomplishment. Milestones, if identified, can be celebrated by the staff when they occur, encouraging continued efforts and achievements.
- The school is benefiting from the leadership provided by the current administration. Both administrators and teachers wish to continue working under this administration for the duration of the next accreditation cycle.